

enduring interests of Israel are inextricably interwoven with the interests of the U.S. may not be correct in a formal and legal sense, but the spirit of these positions should be welcomed and appreciated. From the ashes of any temporary crisis or stresses we expect Israel and the U.S. to emerge strongly, fighting together for the same long-term principles and ideals. Temporary disagreements about strategy and tactics must never be allowed to separate us. Based on our individual perceptions and interpretations some of us oppose the war in Iraq; and some others support it. This difference does not break out along any clear ethnic, racial or religious lines. What we must jointly never forget during this current crisis is that there are hostile enemies of democracy and that Israel must be kept strong in order to remain as a model on the front lines fighting to save the kind of government which Abraham Lincoln said should never perish from the earth.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHING FELLOWS ACT

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Teaching Fellows Act of 2003 with fourteen original cosponsors.

The most critical education issue we face is the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers. In order to keep pace with anticipated retirements and the growing student population, local school districts will need to hire an estimated 2.5 million teachers over the next ten years! These projected shortages are especially serious in some states and districts—especially inner cities and the rapidly growing West and South—and in subjects such as special education, mathematics, physical sciences, and foreign languages.

While all the education improvements and reforms we envision are dependent on a first-rate teaching force, neither political party has given teacher recruitment and retention top billing on its education agenda or has moved beyond stereotypical responses to the challenge.

Neither offering federal stipends or student loan forgiveness to prospective teachers—as proposed by the Clinton administration—nor exhorting individuals to pursue teaching careers—an approach favored by the current administration—is likely to produce the kind of intensive, sustained effort we need to nurture prospective teachers, strengthen their professional identity, and help them succeed once they enter the classroom.

There is no single, simple solution, but I believe that North Carolina's successful Teaching Fellows program offers a model for national emulation. The Teaching Fellows Act would create two federal programs to encourage our best and brightest students to enter and remain in the field of teaching by offering them scholarships as well as professional development and mentoring assistance. One program would offer fellowships and intensive training for high school seniors and college sophomores who want to become teachers, while another would enable teaching assistants and other community college students to

earn their four-year teaching certificates. In exchange, these scholarship recipients would be required to teach for at least four years in a public school or three years in a low-performing school following graduation.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that every teacher be "highly-qualified" by the 2005–06 school year. In order to meet that need, we must embark on an unprecedented teacher recruitment and retention effort. The Teaching Fellows Act gets to the heart of the need for quality and quantity in America's teaching force. We know that such programs work, and with the federal support this bill would provide, these state programs could be building blocks for the intensive national recruitment and retention effort that is essential to strengthening our public education system.

I would like to invite all members of the House to cosponsor the Teaching Fellows Act, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure our schools will have the teachers they need to be successful.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall votes 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, and 126 I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted: "Aye" on rollcall vote 119; "No" on rollcall vote 120; "No" on rollcall vote 121; "No" on rollcall vote 122; "No" on rollcall vote 123; "Aye" on rollcall vote 124; "Aye" on rollcall vote 125; and "Aye" on rollcall vote 126.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2003

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act of 2003." This legislation removes a barrier which has prevented some organizations from donating surplus fire fighting equipment to needy fire departments. Under current law, the threat of civil liability has caused some organizations to destroy fire equipment, rather than donating it to volunteer, rural and other financially-strapped departments.

We know that every day, across the United States, firefighters respond to calls for help. We are grateful that these brave men and women work to save our lives and protect our homes and businesses. We presume that these firefighters work in departments which have the latest and best firefighting and protective equipment. What we must recognize is that there are an estimated 30,000 firefighters who risk their lives daily due to a lack of basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In both rural and urban fire departments, limited budgets make it difficult to purchase more than fuel and minimum maintenance. There is not enough money to buy new equipment. At the

same time, certain industries are constantly improving and updating the fire protection equipment to take advantage of new, state-of-the-art innovation. Sometimes, the surplus equipment may be almost new or has never been used to put out a single fire. Sadly, the threat of civil liability causes many organizations to destroy, rather than donate, millions of dollars of quality fire equipment.

Not only do volunteer fire departments provide an indispensable service, some estimates indicate that the nearly 800,000 volunteer firefighters nationwide save state and local governments \$36.8 billion a year. While volunteering to fight fires, these same, selfless individuals are asked to raise funds to pay for new equipment. Bake sales, pot luck dinners, and raffles consume valuable time that could be better spent training to respond to emergencies. All this, while surplus equipment is being destroyed.

In states that have removed liability barriers, such as Texas, fire companies have received millions of dollars in quality fire fighting equipment. The generosity and good will of private entities donating surplus fire equipment to volunteer fire companies are well received by the firefighters and the communities. The donated fire equipment will undergo a safety inspection by the fire company to make sure firefighters and the public are safe.

We can help solve this problem. Congress can respond to the needs of fire companies by removing civil liability barriers. This bill accomplishes this by raising the current liability standard from negligence to gross negligence. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and look forward to working with the Judiciary Committee to bring this bill to the House Floor.

CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 11, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to submit the following interesting and insightful article for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

WHY THE CRACKDOWN IN CUBA?
(By Wayne S. Smith)

Various newspaper articles reporting the deplorable crackdown on dissidents in Cuba have correctly noted that the situation there earlier had seemed to be inching toward somewhat greater tolerance. During his trip to Cuba in May of last year, for example, President Carter met with Cuban dissidents and in his televised speech to the nation spoke of the Varela Project, an initiative of theirs calling for greater political freedoms. And both before and after Carter's visit, many other Americans, myself included, regularly and openly met with the dissidents as part of a broad effort to expand dialogue and improve relations between our two countries.

Oswaldo Paya, the principal architect of the Varela Project, was even recently allowed to come to the United States to receive the W. Averell Harriman award from the National Democratic Institute in Washington, and from there he went on to Europe. The Cuban government may not have liked what he had to say while abroad, but he wasn't punished for it when he returned home. It did indeed seem that things might